

P R E S S S T A T E M E N T

FROM: LION ENCOUNTER, VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

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3 MAY 2011, MORNING WALK

20 guests were at MASUWE for a lion walk. The guests were in three separate groups of 5, 8 and 7

The group of eight guests went to walk with the seventeen month old cubs, accompanied by five experienced members of staff, including the Lions Manager. Approximately 30 minutes into the walk (around 9 o'clock), the male cub stopped walking and two guests, a husband and wife, and two handlers stopped behind it. The cub turned around and looked at one of the guests, who then turned around as well. The cub jumped on her back, and bit her before bringing her to the ground. During this fall, the guest appears to have injured her leg. The Lions Manager swiftly reacted by inserting his fingers into the cub's diastema (at the back of the gums) which limited the force of the bite. One of the handlers hit the cub on the head twice with a stick, which caused it to release the lady and run into the bush. The Lions Manager administered first aid, while MARS (Medical Air Rescue service) were called. MARS arrived and assessed the guests' condition before transferring her to the Victoria Falls Medical Centre (City Medical Centre) where she's currently receiving treatment for bites, scratches and a possible fractured leg.

The cubs involved in this incident were due to return to Antelope Park on 16th May to continue with the next stage of the programme, during which they will not have any contact with guests. This will continue as planned, but in light of today's incident, these cubs have been retired from walking and will no longer have any interaction with guests.

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